



June 22, 2005

Division of Dockets Management (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, rm. 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

RE: Docket No. 1998N-0359 Program Priorities in the Center for Food
Safety and Applied Nutrition; Request for Comments

The Calorie Control Council ("the Council") provides the following comments on the Food and Drug Administration's request for comments on program priorities in the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) for the fiscal year (FY) 2006. The Council is an international association of manufacturers of low calorie and reduced fat foods and beverages, including the manufacturers and users of a variety of alternative sweeteners, fat replacers and low-calorie bulking agents.

The Council understands and appreciates the tremendous amount of time and effort CFSAN devotes to food security and food safety. The Council urges FDA to continue its financial support of Food Chemicals Codex, which is an important element in ensuring food security and food safety.

CFSAN's involvement in the various Codex Alimentarius committees is important to the Council, which strongly supports CFSAN's continued participation and leadership in these activities.

CFSAN recognizes the severity of the obesity in the U.S. and has activities underway to address this important issue. The Council has a number of petitions pending before the agency, which when approved will assist the consumer in selecting foods with fewer calories than their full calorie counterparts. Specifically, the Council requests that CFSAN include the following in its list of priorities for FY 2006:

The Council's 1996 Citizen Petition (Docket 96P-0143/CP1) requests that food labeling regulations be amended to permit, with suitable labeling, the removal or reduction of ingredients (such as fat and sugar) from standardized foods even when the ingredient is specifically required by the standard. This would allow for a reduction in calories and/or fat to assist in addressing the current obesity epidemic while allowing for more consumer friendly labeling.

The Council's 1997 Citizen Petition (Docket No. 97P-0056/CP1) requests that the agency advise the food industry that it may use a caloric value of not more than 2 calories per gram for soluble fiber in food labeling, including Nutrition Facts labeling. This value is scientifically more defensible than the 4 calorie per gram value currently required for soluble fiber and would facilitate further use of soluble fiber in processed foods, thereby providing additional fiber to the American diet and allowing soluble fiber containing foods to be labeled reduced calorie as appropriate.

The Council's 1995 Citizen Petition (Docket No. 95P-0099/CP1) requests that food labeling regulations be amended to permit the use of the term "polyols" in lieu of "sugar alcohols" in the Nutrition Facts Panel of the food label. As part of this petition, the Council submitted a nationally projectable consumer survey in which 78 percent of those surveyed think the term "sugar alcohol" indicates that a product contains some sugar even when the product is labeled "sugar free." Sixty-nine percent believe the product contains some alcohol. Allowing the use of the term "polyol" in lieu of sugar alcohols would reduce consumer confusion. Since polyols are reduced in calories as compared to sugar approval of this petition could facilitate the selection of reduced calorie foods.

Again, the Council requests that CFSAN act on these long-standing petitions of importance to the consumer and industry, provide funding for the FCC and continue its important participation and leadership in Codex Alimentarius committees.

Respectfully submitted,

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LON/jcr